

## **The Linnean Society of London awards three Tercentenary Medals for outstanding contributions in communicating our understanding of the natural world**

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Today, the Linnean Society of London awards the Society's specially-commissioned Tercentenary Medals to three world-class biologists who have made an outstanding contribution to the world's understanding of natural history and the environment. HRH The Princess Royal is presenting the awards to Sir David Attenborough, Professor Steve Jones and Professor E. O. Wilson at a special ceremony today, marking the culmination of the Linnaean Tercentenary year.

The Swedish naturalist, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) developed the two-word binomial naming system in his book *Species plantarum* (1753). The system was universally adopted by scientists and enabled the scientific world to be able communicate with each other about species of plants and animals, a system that is still used today. In celebration of Linnaeus' Tercentenary, the Society wished to recognise the continuing importance of the communication of natural history and the biological sciences to raise both professional and public awareness in our understanding of the natural world, its wonders and the threats facing it.

The three medals were commissioned from the award-winning designer Felicity Powell, each one representing a century since Linnaeus' birth. In describing the medal, the designer reflects that 'the design pays homage to Linnaeus' great gift as a teacher and communicator in his lifetime'.

The afternoon's proceedings opened with the Society's President, Professor David Cutler admitting HRH The Princess Royal as an Honorary Member of the Society. Her Royal Highness then presented the medals. In speaking of the significance of the awards, Professor Cutler said 'The specially-struck medals are for people internationally recognized for their contribution to our understanding of the natural world who are outstanding and effective popularisers, particularly of the broad concepts of evolution and the importance of biodiversity'.

This event concludes the Linnean Society's Tercentenary celebrations for the year. The 4,000 letters in the Linnaean Correspondence and 14,300 Linnaean Herbarium specimens are now available online through the Society's website. The Linnaeus Link Project was internationally launched in Uppsala in September and new contributors are coming on-stream to join the initiative. The Linnaean Plant Name Typification Project concluded earlier this year with the launch of the outstanding publication *Order out of Chaos: Linnaean Plant Names and their Types*.

**For more information or photos on any of the Linnean Society events and projects, please contact Elaine Shaughnessy, Head of Development or Kate Longhurst, Communications Manager, Linnean Society of London on 020 7434 4479. [www.linnean.org](http://www.linnean.org)**

### **Notes for Editors:**

**The Linnean Society of London** is the world's oldest active biological society. Founded in 1788, the Society takes its name from the great Swedish naturalist, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) who developed the system of binomial nomenclature. This system today provides the fundamental framework for knowledge of the biota of the Earth, supporting effective conservation measures and the sustainable use of biodiversity. The Society is the custodian of Linnaeus' original library and collections and is creating a digital archive, enabling full global access. It encourages and communicates scientific advances through its three world-class journals, open meetings and website. The Society's Fellowship is international and its Fellows are drawn from all walks of life including professional scientists and amateur naturalists. The Society welcomes anyone interested in natural history, in all its forms. [www.linnean.org](http://www.linnean.org)